

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 425

By Cooper B

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Mr. Fred Ford of
Memphis.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to remember the accomplishments of those Tennesseans who, during their lifetimes, served their fellow citizens with the utmost integrity, dedication, and ability; and

WHEREAS, Fred Ford was an exemplary musician and consummate professional who improved the quality of life for his fellow citizens through his art; and

WHEREAS, November 26, 1999 was truly a sad day for all people who had the distinct privilege of knowing Mr. Ford, as well as for the entire state of Tennessee, as this remarkable man passed away at the age of 69; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ford was a highly respected member of the Memphis community; his incredible talents and skills had earned him acclaim as one of the area's most outstanding musicians; and

WHEREAS, his meritorious musical career began even before he graduated from Douglass High School in the late 1940s, when he performed professionally with the Douglass Swingsters Orchestra and the Andrew Chaplin Band; and

WHEREAS, a man of many talents, he played the trumpet and clarinet for Onzie Horne Sr.'s band in the mid-1940s, and after an opening for a saxophone player became available, Mr. Ford switched to this instrument for which he is best known and which became his instrument of choice for his exemplary career; and

WHEREAS, a versatile jazz and rhythm and blues musician, he was a mainstay in the Memphis music scene, and played in hundreds of sessions over the years; and

WHEREAS, not only was Fred Ford adored by his fans, he was highly respected and admired by other great performers in the musical field; his recordings include sessions with Rufus Thomas, Lightnin' Hopkins, Jerry Lee Lewis, Junior Parker, and Alex Chilton to name a few; and

WHEREAS, as a member of tenor saxman Bill Harvey's group, Mr. Ford became a part of B.B. King's first important backing band and also sat in with Texas guitar legend Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown; he was featured on Brown's acclaimed 1954 platter, *Okie Dokie Stomp*; and

WHEREAS, in the 1950s, much of his session work was performed with the Houston-based Peacock and Duke labels; there he sat in with the likes of Little Richard and Big Mama Thornton, as a member of Johnny Otis's band; and

WHEREAS, he produced albums that included "Solo Piano," the Grammy nominated 1974 comeback album by jazz giant Phineas Newborn, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ford had also built up an impressive list of local credits; he performed on the Box Tops' hit *Cry Like a Baby*, as well as on Rufus Thomas's landmark album "Funky Chicken", and Charlie Rich's final album in 1992, "Pictures and Paintings"; and

WHEREAS, former Blues Foundation executive director David Less, who organized a benefit at the New Daisy Theatre in October 1999 for Mr. Ford, known as "FredStock," stated "all the horn players around town point to Fred as the guy they were inspired by"; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ford was also feted in October at Jimmy Crosthwait's multimedia event "They Don't Call It the Bluff City for Nothing" with a City Council resolution proclaiming October 1, as Fred Ford Day; and

WHEREAS, he regularly shared his gifts as a performer and artist at The Center for Southern Folklore, and the Memphis Music & Heritage Festival; he also appeared in the 1991 award-winning documentary *All Day & All Night: Memories From Beale Street Musicians*; and

WHEREAS, driven by his passion for music, he had most recently played heated sessions in a trio with Robert "Honeymoon" Garner; and

WHEREAS, Fred Ford was the proud parent of sons Jamal, Jamil, Jacob, and Joshua, a daughter Jessica Thomas, and stepson Joseph Vallier; he also leaves a loving sister, Annie McKeuens; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ford leaves behind an indelible legacy of artistic integrity and peerless musical talent in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional musician and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we honor the memory of Mr. Fred Ford, reflecting fondly upon his singular artistry and his unparalleled contributions to popular music in Memphis, Tennessee and worldwide.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Ford.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.